



Alachua County Board of County Commissioners

Lee Pinkoson, *Chair*
Charles S. Chestnut IV, *Vice Chair*
Mike Byerly
Ken Cornell
Robert Hutchinson

Administration
Michele L. Lieberman
County Manager

October 18, 2018

Honorable Mayor Lauren Poe
City of Gainesville Commission
200 E. University Avenue
Gainesville, FL 32601

Re: Empowerment Center Oversight Advisory Board

Lauren
Dear Mayor Poe,

At its October 2, 2018 meeting, the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners discussed the County's role in ending homelessness. While no formal action was taken, the Commission asked that I send a letter to the City sharing some of our thoughts and concerns as we continue working together on this important issue. With respect to the GRACE homeless shelter and Dignity Village, Commissioners were in consensus agreement that we have achieved some success and there is clearer focus around the issue of homelessness. For example, various meetings have brought staff and advocates together in the same room to discuss operating issues, policies, and further develop our strategic housing first approach.

It is concerning that while Alachua County shares equally in funding for GRACE, it has no administrative authority over the project. For example, despite numerous conversations and motions, little progress has been made with a RTS Bus Stop, on-site medical clinic, and improved infrastructure or closure of Dignity Village. As a result, our Commissioners discussed changing the County role to a focus more on social services for homeless individuals and families.

Additionally, there is consensus agreement that we should dissolve the Empowerment Center Oversight Advisory Board unless we both agree to a specific set of steps to provide it with authority to act. Accordingly, this letter specifically asks the City Commission to consider dissolving the Empowerment Center Oversight Advisory Board.

I look forward to learning more about the City's future direction with GRACE and its thoughts on dissolving the Oversight Board.

Sincerely,

Lee Pinkoson, Chair
Alachua County Commission
Chr18.011

LP/TT/cw

cc: Board of County Commissioners
Michele L. Lieberman, County Manager
Sylvia Torres, County Attorney
Claudia Tuck, Community Support Services